

Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 DPW-01 IO-12

AID-20 RSR-01 /126 W

----- 090349

O 191143 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8848

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

CINCPAC

USDEL FRANCE IMMEDIATE

COMUSMACV

CDRUSSAG NKP TRAFB

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4469

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS MILI PINT VS

SUBJECT: WEEKLY SITREP, 13 - 19 MARCH 1973

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOLLOWING MSG REC FROM CAN THO ON MAR 19 ACTION

EMBASSY SAIGON REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0060

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINT, VS

SUBJECT: WEEKLY SITREP, 13-19 MARCH 1973

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN THE DELTA REMAINS STEADY, THERE ARE PERCEPTIBLE IF TENATIVE SIGNS THAT THE GVN AND THE PRG ARE EDGING TOWARD THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE. THE COMMUNISTS ARE TRYING TO REPOPULATE THEIR BASE AREAS USING PROPAGANDA AND COERCION TO PERSUADE THE PEOPLE TO MOVE. THE GVN IS PREPARING VILLAGE ELECTIONS TO RATIFY ITS POPULATION CONTROL. MILITARY ACTIVITY IS MOST CONCENTRATED AROUND GVN OUTPOSTS WHICH RVNAF IS BUILDING OR RECONSTRUCTION IN CONTESEED AREAS. THE ICCS IS CONTINUING TO INVESTIGATE NUMEROUS INCIDENTS.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: THE OVERALL SECURITY SITUATION REMAINED BASICALLY UNCHANGED. ARVN DIVISIONS SEEMINGLY HAVE HALTED AGGRESSIVE OPERATIONS AND CURTAILED ARTILLERY USE. HEAVY SECURITY PATROLLING CONTINUES. VC ATTACKS ARE LARGELY DIRECTED AGAINST GVN OUTPOSTS, SOME NEWLY BUILT. INCIDENTS AVERAGED 40 PER DAY DURING THE PAST WEEK, INCLUDING A SMALL HIGH POINT ON MARCH 17. THERE WERE ONLY A FEW GROUND ATTACKS. GVN SECTOR SECURITY OPERATIONS ALSO DECREASED NOTICEABLY. THE MOST NOTEWORTHY INCIDENT WAS A TERRORIST BOMBING OF A CAMBODIAN PAGODA IN VINH BINH, ONE OF THE WORST SINCE THE CEASEFIRE. CASUALTIES FOR THE WEEK MARCH 11-17 WERE: RVNAF: 133 KIA, 710 WIA; VC/NVA: 376 KIA, SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE LEVEL OF LAST WEEK.

3. ICCS/ JMC: THE WEEKS' S HIGHLIGHT WAS THE VISIT OF THE CANADIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER MARCH 17 TO THE REGION VII ICCS-- THE MOST ACTIVE IN VIETNAM. REGION VII ICCS TEAMS CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE NUMEROUS INCIDENTS (38 COMPLETED OR UNDER INVESTIGATION AS OF MARCH 18.) ICCS WILL PROBABLY TRY TO SLOW THE PACE AND MAY DECLINE TO INVESTIGATE SOME MINOR INCIDENTS. ICCS REGION VI IS DEPLOYED TO ALL ITS SITES, THOUGH MINUS THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS AT HONG NGU. ICCS DELTA TEAMS WHEN NOT INVESTIGATING WERE OUT VISITING DISTRICT TOWNS AND BEING CORDIALLY RECEIVED. WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS HAVE BEEN TOLD TO CURTAIL OVERLAND TRAVEL TO AVOID GIVING CREDIT TO GVN CLAIMS OF CONTROL. MUCH OF THE ACTIVITY OF THE ICCS IS DUE TO THE INITIATIVE OF US MEMBERS OF THE FPJMC WORKING THROUGH THEIR GVN COLLEAGUES. AFTER THE US WITHDRAWS FROM THE JMC AND THE GVN SUBSTITUTES NEW TPJMC PERSONNEL FOR THE PRESENT FPJMC PERSONNEL, THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT ICCS ACTIVITY WILL SLOW DOWN.

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4. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY: THE COMMUNISTS APPEAR TO BE SHIFTING

EMPHASIS TOWARD ARMED POLITICAL STRUGGLE. THE VC HAVE INITIATED
A RESE MU LEY#

PROGRAM IN SOME PROVINCES BY INDUCING PEOPLE TO
RETURN TO PHASE AREAS. TACTICS INCLUDE KIDNAPPING PSDF AND
PUBLICIZING A QTE GARDEN LAND FOR THE PEOPLE UNQTE PROGRAM.
SO FAR THEIR EFFORTS APPEAR ONLY marginally EFFECTIVE. THERE
WAS SPECULATION DURING THE WEEK OF THE PRG SURFACING ITS
REMAINING DELEGATES TO THE JMC AND A VC/ NVA OFFENSIVE AFTER
X PLUS SIXTY, BUT THERE IS NO HARD EVIDENCE OF EITHER.
5. GVN ACTIVITY: PROVINCE OFFICIALS BEGAN PREPARATIONS
FOR VILLAGE COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN SECURE AREAS OF PKC AND JUNE.
THE ELECTIONS ARE CKQGNED# TO RATIFY THE GVN' S CLAIMS
TO LEGITIMACY AND POPULAR SUPPORT AND TO PREEMPT EXPECTED
VC CALLS FOR NCRC ELECTIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. THE
GVN BEGAN NEW POLITICAL STRUGGLE AND TAX INFORMATION CAM-
PAIGNS AIMED AT IMPROVING ITS POPULAR IMAGE AND REASSURING
THE PEOPLE ABOUT THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE PHASE. AT THE
SAME TIME, RVNAF IS CONTINUING TO CONSTRUCT OR REBUILD OUT-
POSTS IN AREAS IT PREVIOUSLY CONTROLLED OR WISHES TO CONTEST.
IN ADDITION TO PREVIOUSLY REPORTED CONSTRUCTION IN DINH
TUONG AND KIEN HOA, THE OUTPOST NETWORK IS BEING EXTENDED
IN CONSTESTED PORTIONS OF BA XUYEN, CHUONG THIEN, AND
PHONG DINH AT THE SAME TIME THE NATIONAL POLICE CONTINUE
TO PURSUE THE VIET CONG' S IN THISJUNCTURE. IN PHONG DINH
AND PERHAPS IN OTHER PROVINCES, TARGET LISTS HAVE BEEN PRE-
PARED AND ARRESTS ON CRIMINAL CHARGES ARE BEING CARRIED OUT.
WISNER
BUNKER

NOTE BY OC/ T: # AS RECEIVED. WILL BE SERVICED ON REQUEST.

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JAKARTA
MANILA
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PHNOM PENH

SECSTATE WASHDC
VIENTIANE

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